Amendment to the Claims

1. (currently amended) A <u>computer implemented</u> method of electronically transferring funds from a sender to a receiver, comprising:

    <u>a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse (ACH) member at which is maintained a host account,</u> receiving from the sender an amount of a funds transfer, a designation of a source account for the funds transfer, and contact information of the receiver sufficient for contacting the receiver, without receiving from the sender a designation of a target account of the receiver;

    <u>the host system</u> receiving from the receiver the designation of the target account for receiving the funds from the sender; and

    <u>the host system providing a first instruction</u> ~~instructing an automated clearinghouse (ACH) member~~ <u>to the host financial institution</u> ~~to effect a number of ACH entries~~ to cause the transfer of funds from the source account to the ~~target~~ <u>host</u> account[[.]]<u>; and</u>

    <u>the host system providing a second instruction to the host financial institution to cause the transfer of funds from the host account to the target account;</u>

    <u>wherein any of the first instruction and the second instruction effects through an ACH network a number of ACH entries to transfer funds;</u>

    <u>wherein the sender is not required to have a previously established ACH originator relationship with an ACH member at which the sender's source account is maintained; and</u>

    <u>wherein the receiver is not required to have a previously established ACH originator relationship with an ACH member at which the receiver's target account is maintained.</u>

    ~~wherein instructing the ACH member by an ACH network to effect a number of ACH entries comprises:~~

    ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH debit from the sender's source~~

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30   ~~account to a third-party financial account; and~~

~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH credit from the third party~~
~~financial account to the receiver's target account.~~

1   2.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the designation of the source
2   account includes a routing/transit number and an account number.

1   3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the designation of the target account
2   includes a routing/transit number and an account number.

1   4. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving the amount of
2   the funds transfer, the designation of the source account for the funds transfer, and the
3   contact information of the receiver from the sender via a web site.

1   5. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving the amount of
2   the funds transfer, the designation of a source account for the funds transfer, and the
3   contact information of the receiver from the sender by telephone.

1   6. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising receiving the amount of
2   the funds transfer, the designation of a source account for the funds transfer, and the
3   contact information of the receiver from the sender with an interactive voice response
4   unit.

1   7. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving the amount of
2   the funds transfer, the designation of a source account for the funds transfer, and the
3   contact information of the receiver from the sender by email.

1   8. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving the amount of
2   the funds transfer, the designation of a source account for the funds transfer, and the
3   contact information sufficient of the receiver from the sender by a message from a
4   financial management application of the sender.

1   9. (original) The method of claim 8, further comprising the financial management
2   application automatically determining the sender's source account, and including the

2

3   determined account in the message.

1   10. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   contacting the receiver using the information provided by the sender, and

3   informing the receiver that the sender has initiated or will initiate a transfer of

4   funds to the receiver.

1   11. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving from the sender a telephone number of the receiver; and

3   calling the receiver using the telephone number provided by the sender, and

4   informing the receiver that the sender has initiated or will initiate a transfer of

5   funds.

1   12. (original) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

2   receiving the designation of the target account from the receiver by telephone.

1   13. (original) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

2   receiving the designation of the target account from the receiver using an

3   interactive voice response unit.

1   14. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving the designation of the target account from the receiver via a web site.

1   15. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving from the sender a first and second telephone numbers of the receiver;

3   calling the receiver using the first telephone number provided by the sender; and

4   responsive to the call to the receiver at the first telephone number being

5   unsuccessful, calling the receiver using the second telephone number provided

6   by the sender.

1   16. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving from the sender an email address of the receiver; and

3   contacting the receiver by an email to the email address provided by the sender,

4   and informing the receiver that the sender has initiated or will initiate a

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5   transfer of funds.

1   17. (original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

2   receiving the designation of the target account from the receiver by email.

1   18. (original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

2   providing in the email to the receiver a plurality of alternate means for contacting

3   a service providing the funds transfer to claim the funds.

1   19. (original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

2   including in the email to the receiver computer readable data for updating a

3   financial management application of the receiver's with information

4   describing the funds transfer.

1   20. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving from the sender a description to be associated with the funds transfer

3   and provided to the receiver.

1   21. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   registering the sender for future funds transfers by storing for the sender a list of

3   receivers for receiving funds transfers, each receiver having associated contact

4   information; and

5   wherein receiving from the sender contact information of the receiver comprises

6   receiving from the sender a selection of one of the list of receivers, and

7   automatically using the associated contact information to contact the selected

8   receiver.

1   22.(original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

2   determining whether the receiver specified by the sender has registered

3   information designating the target account and contact information of the

4   receiver; and

5   responsive to the receiver having registered information, contacting the receiver

6   using the registered contact information, and requesting the receiver to

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7   confirm the funds transfer to the registered target account.

1   23. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   registering the sender for future funds transfers by storing for the sender a list of

3   source accounts for providing funds transfers; and

4   wherein receiving from the sender the designation of a source account comprises

5   receiving from the sender a selection of one of the list of source accounts for

6   the funds transfer.

1   24. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   registering the receiver for future funds transfers by storing for the receiver a list

3   of target accounts for receiving funds transfers; and

4   wherein receiving from the receiver the designation of the target account

5   comprises receiving from the receiver a selection of one of the list of target

6   accounts.

1   25. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the receiver is a business and

2   wherein receiving from the receiver the designation of the target account for receiving the

3   funds from the sender comprises:

4   storing for the receiver, prior to the funds transfer by a sender, the designation of

5   the target account of the receiver.

1   26. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving from the sender bill identification information that identifies a bill

3   received from the receiver; and

4   transmitting the bill identification information to the receiver to allow the receiver

5   to credit the sender with payment of the bill for the amount of the funds

6   transfer.

1   27. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   registering the sender for future funds transfers by storing for the sender a list of

3   business receivers for receiving funds transfers, the list including for each

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4   business receiver an account number of a business account of the sender held

5   by the business receiver;

6   registering each business receiver for receiving the future funds transfers by

7   storing for each business receiver the designations of the target account of the

8   business receiver; and

9   automatically, and in response to the sender's designation of one of the sender's

10   list of business receivers, providing the sender's source account and business

11   receiver's stored designated target account to the ACH member and

12   instructing the ACH member to effect a number of ACH entries to cause the

13   transfer of funds from the source account to the target account.

1   28. (original) The method of claim 27, further comprising:

2   providing the business receiver with the sender's business account and the amount

3   of the funds transfer to allow the business receiver to credit the sender's

4   business account for the amount of the funds transfer.

1   29. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the receiver is a business, further

2 comprising:

3   registering the business receiver for receiving the future funds transfers by storing

4   for the business receiver the designation of the target account of the business

5   receiver;

6   receiving from the sender bill identification information that identifies a bill

7   received from the business receiver;

8   automatically, and in response to the sender's designation the business receiver,

9   providing the sender's source account and business receiver's stored

10   designated target account to the ACH member and instructing the ACH

11   member to effect a number of ACH entries to cause the transfer of funds from

12   the source account to the target account; and

13   transmitting the bill identification information to the business receiver to allow

14   the business receiver to credit the sender with payment of the bill for the

15   amount of the funds transfer.

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1   30. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   authenticating the sender by:

3   receiving from the sender first current activity information of the source

4   account;

5   receiving from an automated system second current activity information of

6   the source account;

7   comparing the first current activity information with the second current

8   activity information to determine whether the activity information

9   matches; and

10   responsive to the first current activity information from the sender

11   matching the second current activity information from the automated

12   system, proceeding with the funds transfer.

1   31. (original) The method of claim 30, wherein the automated system is the Point

2   of Sale system.

1   32. (original) The method of claim 30, wherein the automated system is the

2   Automated Teller Machine system.

1   33. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   authenticating the sender by:

3   receiving from the sender a first account balance of the source account;

4   receiving from an automated system a second account balance of the

5   source account;

6   comparing the first account balance with the second account balance to

7   determine whether the balances match.

1   34. (original) The method of claim 33, further comprising:

2   responsive to the first and second account balances matching, continuing the

3   funds transfer; and

4   responsive to the first and second account balances not matching, terminating the

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5   funds transfer.

1   35. (original) The method of claim 33, wherein the first and second account

2   balances match if they are within a predetermined range of each other.

1   36. (original) The method of claim 33, further comprising:

2   adjusting the first account balance with at least one current transaction occurring

3   after the second account balance was last updated.

1   37. (original) The method of claim 33, wherein the automated system is the Point

2   of Sale system.

1   38. (original) The method of claim 33, wherein the automated system is the

2   Automated Teller Machine system.

1   39. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   authenticating the sender by:

3   receiving from the sender a check number and an amount for a check

4   drawn on the source account;

5   providing the check number to an automated system to determine the

6   amount of the check; and

7   comparing the amount of the check received from the sender with the

8   amount for the check received from an automated system to determine

9   whether the amounts match.

1   40. (original) The method of claim 39, further comprising:

2   responsive to the check amounts matching, continuing the funds transfer; and

3   responsive to the check amounts not matching, terminating the funds transfer.

1   41. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   authenticating the sender by:

3   receiving from the sender a plurality of check numbers and respective

4   amounts for checks drawn on the source account;

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5   providing the check numbers to an automated system to determine the

6   amount of each check; and

7   comparing the amounts of the checks received from the sender with the

8   amounts for the checks received from an automated system to

9   determine whether the amounts of corresponding check numbers

10   match.

1   42. (original) The method of claim 41, further comprising:

2   responsive to at least a predetermined number of the check amounts matching,

3   continuing the funds transfer; and

4   responsive to at least the predetermined number of the check amounts not

5   matching, terminating the funds transfer.

1   43. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   authenticating the sender by:

3   receiving from the sender a user name and password for the sender's

4   financial account at the sender's financial institution;

5   attempting to access the sender's financial account via an online system

6   using the received user name and password;

7   responsive to successfully accessing the sender's financial account,

8   continuing with the funds transfer; and

9   responsive to not successfully accessing the sender's financial account,

10   terminating the funds transfer.

1   44. (original) The method of claim 43, further comprising:

2   responsive to successfully accessing the sender's financial account, obtaining

3   current account activity information for the source account.

1   45. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   authenticating the sender by:

3   receiving from the sender a user name and password for an personal online

4   account of the sender;

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5   attempting to access the sender's personal online account via an online

6   system using the received user name and password;

7   responsive to successfully accessing the sender's personal online account,

8   continuing with the funds transfer; and

9   responsive to not successfully accessing the sender's financial account,

10   terminating the funds transfer.

1   46. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   determining whether there is sufficient funds in the source account to effect the

3   funds transfer without overdrawing the account;

4   responsive to there being sufficient funds, providing the instructions to the ACH

5   member to effect the ACH entries.

1   47. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   prior to instructing the ACH member:

3   querying a balance in the source account via an automated system;

4   comparing the balance in the source account with the amount of the funds

5   transfer;

6   responsive to the balance exceeding the amount of the funds transfer,

7   continuing the funds transfer;

8   responsive to the balance not exceeding the amount of the funds transfer,

9   terminating the funds transfer.

1   48. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   prior to instructing the ACH member:

3   querying via an automated system a balance in the source account;

4   comparing the balance in the source account with the amount of the funds

5   transfer; and

6   responsive to the balance exceeding the amount of the funds transfer by at

7   least a predetermined amount, continuing the funds transfer; and

8   responsive to the balance not exceeding the amount of the funds transfer by at

9 least a predetermined amount, terminating the funds transfer.

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1   49. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein providing the source account and

2 target account designations to an automated clearinghouse (ACH) member and

3 instructing the ACH member to effect a number of ACH entries to cause the transfer of

4 funds from the source account to the target account further comprises:

5   providing the source account designation to the ACH member and instructing the

6   ACH member to effect an ACH debit of the source account for the amount of

7   the funds transfer;

8   querying via an automated system a balance in the source account after the ACH

9   debit to the source account has posted;

10   comparing the balance in the source account with the amount of the funds

11   transfer;

12   responsive to the balance exceeding the amount of the funds transfer, instructing

13   the ACH member to effect an ACH credit of the target account for the amount

14   of the funds transfer; and

15   responsive to the balance not exceeding the amount of the funds transfer,

16   terminating the funds transfer.

1   50. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 authenticating the sender by:

3   receiving from the sender access data for accessing the sender's financial

4   institution via an online system;

5   attempting to access the sender's financial institution via an online system;

6   responsive to successfully accessing the sender's financial institution via

7   the online system, continuing with the funds transfer; and

8   responsive to not successfully accessing the sender's financial institution

9   via the online system, not continuing with the funds transfer.

1   51. (original) The method of claim 50, wherein receiving from the sender access

2 data further comprises receiving the sender's user name and password for accessing the

3 sender's financial institution via an online system.

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1   52. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving from the receiver a pre-authorization to withdraw the transfer amount

3   from the receiver's target account if the funds are retracted by the sender's

4   financial institution.

1   53. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the sender does not have a

2   previously established ACH originator relationship with an ACH member at

3   which the sender's source account is maintained.

1   54. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the receiver does not have a

2   previously established ACH originator relationship with an ACH member at which the

3   receiver's target account is maintained.

1   55. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein neither the sender nor the receiver

2   has an originator relationship with an ACH member for originating ACH entries, and a

3   third party has an originator relationship with an ACH member for originating the ACH

4   entries to cause the transfer of funds from the source account to the target account.

1   56. (canceled)

1   57. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   informing the sender that the funds transfer has been successfully completed by at

3   least one of the following communication means:

4   by an email message to the sender;

5   by a telephone call to the sender; or

6   by updating a web page available to the sender.

1   58. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   informing the receiver that the funds transfer has been successfully completed by

3   at least one of the following communication means:

4   by an email message to the receiver;

5   by a telephone call to the receiver; or

6   by updating a web page available to the receiver.

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1   59. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the sender's source account is a tax
2 refund account.

1   60. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the sender's source account is a
2 credit line account.

1   61. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the sender's source account is a
2 credit card account, further comprising:
3   charging the sender's account for the amount of the funds transfer, the charge to
4   be paid to a third party; and
5   instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH credit for the transfer amount from
6   the third party's financial account to the receiver's target account.

1   62. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the receiver's target account is a
2 tax refund account.

1   63.(original) The method of claim 1, wherein the receiver's financial account is a
2 credit card account, further comprising:
3   instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH debit for the transfer amount from
4   the sender's source account to a third party's financial account; and
5   crediting the receiver's credit card account for the amount of the funds transfer,
6   the credit to be paid by the third party.

1   64. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   receiving a first password from the sender for use in identifying the receiver;
3   receiving a second password from the receiver;
4   responsive to the first and second password matching, continuing with the fund
5   transfer; and
6   responsive to the first and second password not matching, not continuing with the
7   fund transfer.

1   65. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

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2   determining that the receiver identified by the sender is the sender; and

3   automatically prompting the sender to provide a target account for the funds

4   transfer.

1   66. (currently amended) A computer implemented method of electronic funds

2   transfer from senders for paying bills from a business receiver, the method comprising:

3   a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively

4   coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse

5   (ACH) member at which is maintained a host account, receiving from each of

6   the plurality of senders:

7   an amount of a funds transfer for paying a bill from the business receiver;

8   a designation of the sender's source account for the funds transfer; and

9   payment routing information including at least one of a designation of the

10   business account of the sender with the business receiver or bill

11   identification information of a bill;

12   the host system receiving from the business receiver the designation of the target

13   account for receiving the funds for payment of bills;

14   the host system electronically transmitting the source accounts designations of the

15   plurality of senders and the target account designation of the business receiver

16   to an ACH member and instructing the ACH member to the host financial

17   institution, providing a first instruction to the host financial institution to

18   effect a number of use ACH entries to cause a plurality of funds transfers from

19   the source accounts of the senders to the target host account, and providing a

20   second instruction to credit the amount of fund transfers to the target account

21   of the business receiver; and

22   the host system providing the business receiver with the payment routing

23   information of the each of the senders and the amount of funds transfer by

24   each sender to allow the business receiver to credit each sender for the amount

25   of the funds transfer[[;]].

26   instructing the ACH member to effect ACH debits from the senders' source

27   accounts to a third party's financial account; and

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28 ~~instructing the ACH member to effect at least one ACH credit from the third~~

29 ~~party's financial account to the business receiver's target account for a total~~

30 ~~amount of the senders' fund transfers.~~

1 67. (canceled)

1 68. (original) The method of claim 66, further comprising:

2 receiving from the business receiver bills for each of the plurality of senders; and

3 providing to each sender the respective bill for the sender.

1 69. (original) The method of claim 68, wherein providing to each sender the

2 respective bill for the sender further comprises sending each sender an email with the bill

3 from the business receiver.

1 70. (original) The method of claim 68, wherein providing to a sender the

2 respective bill for the sender further comprises presenting the bill for the sender on a web

3 page.

1 71. (currently amended) A computer implemented method of electronic funds

2 transfer from a sender for paying a bill from a business receiver, the method comprising:

3 <u>a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively</u>

4 <u>coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse</u>

5 <u>(ACH) member at which is maintained a host account,</u> receiving from the

6 sender an amount of a funds transfer for paying the bill from the business

7 receiver, a designation of the sender's source account for the funds transfer,

8 and payment routing information including at least one of a designation of the

9 business account of the sender with the business receiver or bill identification

10 information associated with the bill;

11 <u>the host system</u> electronically transmitting the source account designation of the

12 sender and the amount of the funds transfer to the business receiver to allow

13 the business receiver to effect a number of automated clearinghouse entries to

14 cause the funds transfer for the amount from the source account of the sender

15 to the target account of the business receiver; <u>and</u>

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16   the host system electronically transmitting to the business receiver the payment

17   routing information of the sender to allow the business receiver to credit the

18   sender for payment of the bill in the amount of the funds transfer[[;]]~.

19   providing means for an ACH member to effect an ACH debit from the sender's

20   source account to a third party financial account; and

21   providing means for instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH credit from

22   the third party financial account to the business receiver's target account.

1   72.   (currently amended) A computer implemented method of electronic funds

2 transfer from a sender for paying a bill from a business receiver, the method comprising:

3   a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively

4   coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse

5   (ACH) member at which is maintained a host account, receiving from the

6   sender an amount of a funds transfer for paying the bill from the business

7   receiver, a designation of the sender's source account for the funds transfer,

8   and payment routing information including at least one of a designation of the

9   business account of the sender with the business receiver or bill identification

10   information associated with the bill;

11   the host system providing the source account designation of the sender and a

12   target account designation of a third party to the host financial institution an

13   automated clearinghouse (ACH) member and instructing the host financial

14   institution ACH member to effect an ACH entry to debit the amount of the

15   funds transfer from the sender's source account to the third party's target

16   account;

17   the host system providing the business receiver with the amount of the funds

18   transfer and the third party's financial account designation to allow the

19   business receiver to effect an ACH entry to debit of the amount of the funds

20   transfer from the third party's financial account to a target account of the

21   business receiver; and

22   the host system providing the business receiver with the payment routing

23   information of the sender to allow the business receiver to credit the sender

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24   for payment of the bill in the amount of the funds transfer.

1   73. (currently amended) A computer implemented method for authenticating a

2 sender of an electronic funds transfer, the method comprising:

3   a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively

4   coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse

5   (ACH) member at which is maintained a host account, receiving from the

6   sender first current account activity information of a source account from

7   which the funds are to be transferred;

8   the host system receiving from an automated system second current account

9   activity information of the source account-;

10   the host system comparing the first current account activity information with the

11   second current account activity information to determine whether the activity

12   information matches;

13   responsive to the account activity information matching, the host system

14   continuing with a transfer of funds from the source account; and

15   responsive to the account activity information not matching, the host system not

16   continuing a transfer of funds from the source account.

1   74. (previously presented) The method of claim 73, wherein the current account

2 activity information is account balance of the source account.

1   75. (original) The method of claim 74, wherein the first and second account

2 balances match if they are within a predetermined range of each other.

1   76. (original) The method of claim 74, further comprising:

2   adjusting the first account balance with at least one current transaction occurring

3   on the same day as the funds transfer.

1   77. (original) The method of claim 74, wherein the automated system is the Point

2 of Sale system.

1   78. (original) The method of claim 74, wherein the automated system is the

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2   Automated Teller Machine system.

1   79. (original) The method of claim 74, wherein the account activity information is

2   the check number and amount of at least one check written on the source account.

1   80. (currently amended) A computer implemented method for authenticating a

2   sender of an electronic funds transfer, the method comprising:

3   a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively

4   coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse

5   (ACH) member at which is maintained a host account, receiving from the

6   sender a check number and an amount for a check drawn on a source account

7   from which the funds are to be transferred;

8   the host system providing the check number to an automated system to determine

9   the amount of the check; and

10   the host system comparing the amount of the check received from the sender with

11   the amount for the check received from the automated system to determine

12   whether the amounts match;

13   responsive to the check amounts matching, the host system continuing with a

14   transfer of funds from the source account; and

15   responsive to the check amounts not matching, the host system not continuing

16   with a transfer of funds from the source account.

1   81. (currently amended) A computer implemented method executed by a funds

2   transfer service operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively

3   coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse (ACH) member

4   at which is maintained a host account, for reducing the credit risk of an electronic funds

5   transfer on behalf of a sender using an automated clearinghouse network, wherein the

6   funds transfer service is the originator of automated clearinghouse entries for effecting

7   the funds transfer, and wherein the sender has a source account from which the funds are

8   to be transferred at a financial institution independent of the funds transfer service, the

9   method comprising:

10   the funds transfer service receiving a request from a sender to transfer funds to a

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11 receiver, the request from the sender including a designation of the source

12 account from which the funds are to be transferred, and a designation of a

13 recipient;

14 the funds transfer service querying an automated system to determine a balance in

15 the source account of the sender at the sender's financial institution;

16 responsive to the balance being positive, the funds transfer service continuing

17 with a transfer of funds from the source account; and

18 responsive to the balance being negative, the funds transfer service terminating

19 the transfer of funds from the source account[[.]];

20 wherein the sender is not required to have a previously established ACH

21 originator relationship with an ACH member at which the sender's source

22 account is maintained.

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1 82. (currently amended) A computer implemented method for authenticating a

2 sender of an electronic funds transfer, the method comprising:

3 a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively

4 coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse

5 (ACH) member at which is maintained a host account, receiving from the

6 sender a plurality of check numbers and respective amounts for checks drawn

7 on the source account from which the funds are to be transferred;

8 the host system providing the check numbers to an automated system to determine

9 the respective amount of each check;

10 the host system comparing the amounts of the checks received from the sender

11 with the amounts for the checks received from an automated system to

12 determine whether the respective amounts of corresponding check numbers

13 match;

14 responsive to at least a predetermined number of the check amounts matching, the

15 host system not terminating the transfer of funds from the source account; and

16 responsive to at least the predetermined number of the check amounts not

17 matching, the host system terminating the transfer of funds from the source

19

18   account.

1   83. (currently amended) A computer implemented method for reducing the risk of

2 an electronic funds transfer by a sender using an automated clearinghouse network

3 wherein the sender is not the originator of the automated clearinghouse entries, the

4 method comprising:

5   a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively

6   coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse

7   (ACH) member at which is maintained a host account, querying an automated

8   system to determine a balance in the source account of the sender;

9   the host system comparing the balance in the source account with an amount of

10   the funds transfer by the sender;

11   responsive to the balance exceeding the amount of the funds transfer, the host

12   system continuing with a transfer of funds from the source account only if the

13   balance exceeds the amount of the funds transfer by at least a predetermined

14   amount; and

15   responsive to the balance not exceeding the amount of the funds transfer, the host

16   system terminating the transfer of funds from the source account.

1   84. (canceled)

1   85. (currently amended) A computer implemented method of performing an

2 electronic funds transfer from a sender to a receiver using an automated clearinghouse

3 network, wherein the sender is not the originator of the automated clearinghouse entries,

4 the method comprising:

5   a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively

6   coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse

7   (ACH) member at which is maintained a host account, providing a source

8   account designation of a source account of the sender from which the funds

9   are to be transferred to an automated-clearinghouse (ACH) member the host

10   financial institution and instructing the ACH member the financial institution

11   to effect an ACH debit of the source account for an amount of the funds

20

12   transfer;

13   after the ACH debit to the source account has posted, the host system comparing

14   the balance in the source account with the amount of the funds transfer; and

15   responsive to the balance exceeding the amount of the funds transfer, the host

16   system instructing the ~~ACH member~~ host financial institution to effect an

17   ACH credit for the amount of the funds transfer to a target account of the

18   receiver[[;]].

19   ~~wherein instructing the ACH member to effect a ACH debit further comprises~~

20   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH debit from the sender's source~~

21   ~~account to a third party financial account; and~~

22   ~~wherein instructing the ACH member to effect a ACH credit further comprises~~

23   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH credit from the third party~~

24   ~~financial account to the receiver's target account.~~

1   86.(original) The method of claim 85, further comprising:

2   responsive to the balance not exceeding the amount of the funds transfer, utilizing

3   a secondary system to determine whether the source account has sufficient

4   funds to perform the funds transfer..

1   87. (currently amended) A computer implemented method of processing

2   payments for online purchases on the internet, the method comprising:

3   a host system, operating on a conventional computer system and communicatively

4   coupled to a host financial institution that is an automated clearinghouse

5   (ACH) member at which is maintained a host account, receiving via the

6   internet from a seller a request to process a purchase by a purchaser;

7   the host system receiving via the internet from the purchaser a designation of a

8   source account from which the purchase amount is to be transferred;

9   the host system receiving the amount of the purchase; and

10   the host system providing to ~~an automated clearinghouse (ACH) member~~ the host

11   financial institution the source account designation and designation of a target

12   account of the seller for receiving the purchase amount, and instructing the

13   ~~ACH member~~ to <u>host financial institution</u> effect a number of ACH entries to

14   cause the transfer of the purchase amount from the source account of the

15   purchaser to the ~~target~~ <u>host</u> account of the seller <u>and instructing the host</u>

16   <u>financial institution to effect a number of ACH entries to cause the transfer of</u>

17   <u>the purchase amount from the host account to account of seller,</u> ~~wherein~~

18   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect a number of ACH entries further~~

19   ~~comprises:~~

20   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH debit from the sender's source~~

21   ~~account to a third party financial account; and~~

22   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH credit from the third party~~

23   ~~financial account to the seller's target account.~~

1   88. The method of claim 87, further comprising:

2   receiving with the request from the seller a designation of the target account of the

3   seller for receiving an amount of the purchase.

1   89. (currently amended) A system for facilitating funds transfers, comprising:

2   a web site comprising:

3   at least one web page that receives a request from a sender for transferring

4   funds, including form fields for receiving a designation of a source

5   account of the sender, an amount of the funds transfer, and contact

6   information of the receiver of the funds transfer, without receiving

7   from the sender a target account designation of the receiver;

8   at least one web page that receives from a receiver of a funds transfer a

9   designation of a target account for the funds transfer; and

10   a database coupled to the web site for receiving and storing the sender and

11   receiver provided information; and

12   a host computer coupled to the database to obtain the sender and receiver

13   provided information therefrom, and further coupled via a communications

14   network to an automated clearinghouse (ACH) network, and that transmits to

15   an ACH member of the ACH network <u>first set of</u> instructions to effect a

22

16   number of ACH entries to cause the transfer the amount from the sender's

17   source account <u>to the ACH member and a second set of instructions to effect a</u>

18   <u>number of ACH entries to cause the transfer the amount from the ACH</u>

19   <u>member</u> to the receiver's target account[[;]]

20   ~~wherein the instructions comprise:~~

21   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH debit from the sender's source~~

22   ~~account to a third party financial account; and~~

23   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH credit from the third party~~

24   ~~financial account to the receiver's target account.~~

1   90. (currently amended) A system for facilitating funds transfers, comprising:

2   a first electronic communications interface coupled to a public communications

3   network to receive from a client computer operated by a sender a transmitted

4   request to transfer funds of the sender to a receiver, the request including a

5   designation of a source account of the sender, an amount of the funds transfer,

6   and contact information of the receiver of the funds transfer, the request not

7   including a target account designation of the receiver;

8   a database coupled to the first electronic communications interface to receive and

9   store the request;

10   a second electronic communications interface coupled to the public

11   communications network that processes the contact information of the

12   receiver to contact the receiver;

13   a third electronic communications interface coupled to the public communications

14   network that receives from the receiver an electronic transmission including a

15   designation of a target account of the receiver, and further coupled to the

16   database to update the stored request with the received target account; and

17   a processing component, coupled to read the request from the database, and

18   further coupled to an interface to an automated clearinghouse (ACH) network,

19   that processes the request by transmitting <u>a first set of</u> instructions to an ACH

20   member to effect a number of ACH entries to cause the transfer the amount

21   from the sender's source account to ~~the~~ <u>an ACH member account and a</u>

23

22   second set of instructions to the ACH member to effect a number of ACH

23   entries to cause the transfer the amount from the ACH member account

24   account to the receiver's target account[[;]].

25   ~~wherein the instructions comprise:~~

26   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH debit from the sender's source~~

27   ~~account to a third party financial account; and~~

28   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH credit from the third party~~

29   ~~financial account to the receiver's target account.~~

1   91. (original) The system of claim 90 wherein the first electronic communications

2   interface comprises a web server and a web page containing a form for receiving the

3   request.

1   92. (original) The system of claim 90, wherein the first electronic

2   communications interface comprises an interactive voice response telephone system.

1   93. (original) The system of claim 90 wherein the first electronic communications

2   interface comprises an electronic mail post office that receives the request in an

3   electronic mail communication from the sender, and a parser that extracts the request

4   from the electronic mail communication.

1   94. (original) The system of claim 90 wherein the second electronic

2   communications interface comprises electronic mail generation software that generates

3   an electronic mail communication to the receiver and transmits the electronic mail

4   communication to the receiver via the public communication network, the electronic mail

5   communication including information identifying the sender, and information enabling

6   the receiver to provide the target account designation to the third electronic

7   communications interface.

1   95. (original) The system of claim 90 wherein the second electronic

2   communications interface comprises an interactive voice response telephone system.

1   96. (original) The system of claim 90 wherein the second electronic

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2   communications interface comprises an electronic mail post office which receives the

3   request in an electronic mail communication from the sender, and a parser that extracts

4   the request from the electronic mail communication.

1   97.   (currently amended) A computer mediated method of electronically

2   transferring funds from a sender to a receiver, comprising:

3   on a sender's client device:

4   receiving from the sender a request for a funds transfer, the request

5   including a designation of a source account for the funds transfer, and

6   contact information of the receiver sufficient for contacting the

7   receiver, and not including from the sender a designation of a target

8   account of the receiver;

9   transmitting the request to a host system;

10   on the host system:

11   receiving the request from the sender's client device ;

12   transmitting to the receiver using the contact information included in the

13   request, information indicating that the sender has initiated a funds

14   transfer to the receiver;

15   on a receiver's client device:

16   receiving the transmitted information from the host system;

17   transmitting to the host system a designation of the receiver's target

18   account for receiving the funds transfer; and

19   on the host system:

20   receiving from the receiver's client device the designation of the target

21   account for receiving the funds from the sender; and

22   transmitting to an automated clearinghouse (ACH) member a first set of

23   instructions to effect a number of ACH entries to cause the transfer of funds

24   from the sender's source account to an ACH member account and tramsnitting

25   to the ACH member a second set of instructions to effect a number of ACH

26   entries to cause the transfer of funds from the ACH member account to the

27   receiver's target account[[;]].

25

28   ~~wherein the instructions comprise:~~

29   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH debit from the sender's source~~

30   ~~account to a third party financial account; and~~

31   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH credit from the third party~~

32   ~~financial account to the receiver's target account.~~

1   98. (currently amended) A system for electronically transferring funds from a

2   sender to a receiver, comprising:

3   software means for receiving from the sender an amount of a funds transfer, a

4   designation of a source account for the funds transfer, and contact information

5   of the receiver sufficient for contacting the receiver, without receiving from

6   the sender a designation of a target account of the receiver;

7   software means for receiving from the receiver the designation of the target

8   account for receiving the funds from the sender; and

9   software means for <u>first</u> instructing an automated clearinghouse (ACH) member

10   to effect a number of ACH entries to cause the transfer of funds from the

11   source account to the <u>an ACH member account and for second instructing the</u>

12   <u>ACH member to effect a number of ACH entries to cause the transfer of funds</u>

13   <u>from the ACH member account to the</u> target account.<u>[[;]]</u> ~~wherein instructing~~

14   ~~the ACH member to effect a number of ACH entries comprises:~~

15   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH debit from the sender's source~~

16   ~~account to a third party financial account; and~~

17   ~~instructing the ACH member to effect an ACH credit from the third party~~

18   ~~financial account to the receiver's target account.~~

1   99. (currently amended) A method of conducting a business of facilitating

2   electronic funds transfers between senders and receivers, the method comprising:

3   providing a web site <u>coupled to a host system, operating on a conventional</u>

4   <u>computer system and communicatively coupled to a host financial institution</u>

5   <u>that is an automated clearinghouse (ACH) member at which is maintained a</u>

6   <u>host account,</u> that receives from a sender a request for an electronic funds

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7   transfer, the request including the sender's source account, a funds transfer

8   amount, and contact information of a receiver of the funds transfer, and not

9   including the target account of the receiver for receiving the funds, and that

10   separately receives from the receiver the target account for receiving the funds

11   transfer; and

12   responsive to receiving via the web site a sender's request to transfer funds to a

13   receiver, and responsive to the receiver's designation of the target account,

14   automatically providing a first set of instructions to ~~an automated system~~

15   ~~member~~ the host financial system which result in a first transfer the funds

16   transfer amount from the sender's source account to ~~a third party~~ the host

17   ~~financial~~ account and a second set of instructions to transfer ~~of~~ the funds

18   transfer amount from the ~~third party~~ host account to the receiver's target

19   account.

1   100. (original) The method of claim 99, wherein:

2   the web site includes:

3   a first form for receiving from a sender information identifying the

4   sender's source account for a funds transfer, a funds transfer amount,

5   and information for contacting a receiver of the funds transfer; and

6   a second form for receiving from a receiver of a funds transfer information

7   designating a target account for receiving the funds of a sender; and

8   the method further comprising:

9   receiving via the first form the request from a sender to transfer funds to

10   the receiver;

11   automatically contacting the receiver using the contact information to

12   notify the receiver of the funds transfer; and

13   receiving via the second form the receiver's target account for receiving

14   the funds transfer.

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101. (original) The method of claim 100, wherein automatically providing instructions to an automated system further comprises:

    providing instructions to an automated clearinghouse system to:

        perform the first transfer of the funds transfer amount from the sender's source account to a third party's account; and

        perform the second transfer of the funds transfer amount from the third party's account to the receiver's target account.

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